

National Institute on Alcohol
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History of NIAAA

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President Nixon signed the Comprehensive Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism Prevention, Treatment, and Rehabilitation Act of 1970 on December 31, 1970. This legislation was also known as the Hughes Act for Senator Harold Hughes, a person who was in recovery from alcohol use disorder (AUD) and championed the cause of AUD research. The Hughes Act authorized a comprehensive Federal program to address the prevention and treatment of alcohol-related problems. The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism was first established as a component of the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH). It then became a separate institute alongside NIMH and the National Institute on Drug Abuse under the Alcohol, Drug Abuse, and Mental Health Administration in 1974. Under the ADAMHA Reorganization Act of 1992, NIAAA became an independent institute of the National Institutes of Health.

In its more-than-50-year history, NIAAA has led the effort to reframe alcohol use disorder as a medical—rather than a moral—issue, and to study topics relating to alcohol and health systematically, through evidence-based findings.

Throughout its history, NIAAA has conducted and supported research that has improved our understanding of the effects of alcohol on health and well-being, as well as influenced legislation and attitudes toward alcohol in our society. Some key events in alcohol research over the Institute's history include:

1971—First Special Report to the U.S. Congress on Alcohol and Health issued.

1977—First national research workshop on fetal alcohol syndrome organized by NIAAA.

1977—First government health advisory on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders issued.

1981—U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory on Alcohol and Pregnancy published.

1988—Minimum legal drinking age law instituted.

1988—Legislation passed requiring that alcoholic beverage containers be labeled with a warning of the adverse effects of alcohol on the developing fetus.

1989—Collaborative Studies on Genetics of Alcoholism (COGA) initiated.

1991—National Longitudinal Alcohol Epidemiologic Survey (NLAES) launched.

1994—FDA approves naltrexone, a drug that can reduce alcohol craving; in 2006, a long-lasting injectable version of the drug is approved.

1998—Creation of the Task Force on College Drinking.

1999—First National Alcohol Screening Day.

2001—National Epidemiologic Survey on Alcohol and Related Conditions (NESARC) launched.

2002—A Call to Action: Changing the Culture of Drinking at U.S. Colleges published.

2002—Interdisciplinary Neuroscience Initiative on Alcoholism established.

2003—Creation of the Collaborative Initiative on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders.

2003—Prenatal Alcohol, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, and Stillbirth Research Network launched.

2004—Underage Drinking Research Initiative established.

2005—U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory on Alcohol and Pregnancy updated.

2005—NIAAA releases *Helping Patients Who Drink Too Much: A Clinician's Guide*.

2007—*The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Prevent and Reduce Underage Drinking* released.

2007—Clinical Investigations Group established.

2007—NIAAA shares an Emmy award with HBO, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and the National Institute on Drug Abuse for *The Addiction Project*.

2009—NIAAA releases the Rethinking Drinking interactive Website and print publication.

2010—NIAAA celebrates its 40th year of alcohol research.

2011—NIAAA releases *Alcohol Screening and Brief Intervention*

for Youth: A Practitioner's Guide.

2016—NIAAA collaborates with HBO Documentary Films to produce [*Risky Drinking*](#).

2017—NIAAA launches the site [AlcoholTreatment.niaaa.nih.gov](https://alcohol.treatment.niaaa.nih.gov).

NIAAA Directors

Director	Starting Date	Ending Date
Morris E. Chafetz	1972	September 1, 1975
Ernest P. Noble	February 1976	April 1978
Loran Archer (Acting)	April 1978	April 1979
John R. DeLuca	May 1979	October 1981
Loran Archer (Acting)	November 1981	July 1982

William E. Mayer (Acting)	August 1982	July 1983
Robert G. Niven	August 1983	December 1985
Loran Archer (Acting)	January 1986	October 1986
Enoch Gordis	November 1986	January 2002
Raynard Kington (Acting)	January 2002	November 2002
Ting-Kai Li	November 2002	October 2008
Kenneth R. Warren (Acting)	November 2008	December 2013
George F. Koob	January 2014	Present

To learn more about NIAAA's history, please see:

NIAAA at 50: A Legacy of Advancing Alcohol Research

The 40th-anniversary issue of the Institute's peer-reviewed scientific journal, *Alcohol Research: Current Reviews*:
https://pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/arh40/toc33-1_2.htm

"40 Years of Research Leadership"
- <https://pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/AA79/AA79.htm>

The NIAAA Director's page: <https://www.niaaa.nih.gov/about-niaaa/our-staff/directors-page>